

**WEST BERKSHIRE
STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
WEDNESDAY, 6 MARCH 2019**

**VENUE: THATCHAM BAPTIST CHURCH, WHEELERS GREEN WAY, THATCHAM,
RG19 4YF**

Present:

Group A – Other Faiths Members

Revd David Taylor (Thatcham Baptist Church)

Group B – Church of England Members

Mrs Val Bolan (C of E), Mrs Mary Stagg (C of E)

Group C – Teaching Association Members

Mr Bernard Eggleton (NASUWT)

Group D – WBC Councillors

Councillor Sheila Ellison (WBC)

LA Advisors:

Ms Alison Harris (Independent Consultant), Keith Harvey (Head Teacher), Rachel Manley (Head Teacher), Maria Pratico

Also Present: Janet Giddings (Democratic Services Officer)

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Pamela Bale (WBC), Councillor Billy Drummond (WBC), Mrs Lucy Gallagher (Catholic), Revd Mary Harwood (C of E), Councillor Carol Jackson-Doerge (WBC), Mobasshir Mushtaq, Ms Clare Nolan (NASUWT) and Mr Robin Sharples (C of E)

14 Membership

Membership of SACRE

2.1 Group Members: Maria Pratico

SACRE welcomed Maria Pratico who was considering rejoining, having left in 2015. Maria Pratico is retired from her post as Head of RE at St Bartholomew's School, Newbury.

2.2 Advisors: Rachel Manley, David Rees

Keith Harvey tendered his resignation, introducing Rachel Manley as a potential replacement. Rachel was the RE Co-ordinator at St Nicolas's C of E Junior School where Keith is Headteacher and is now Headteacher at Yattendon C of E Primary School. David Taylor suggested Rachel gave consideration to joining SACRE once she had attended this meeting.

Lucy Gallagher also tendered her resignation from SACRE as a result of being unable to attend the required number of consecutive meetings due to ongoing work commitments.

This was Alison Harris's last meeting. She was thanked by David Taylor for the help and support she has given to SACRE. David Rees, an independent RE adviser would take over the role. David advises a number of SACREs and had worked with Alison Harris and Jan Lever Education Consultancy and Training.

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15 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th November 2018 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman.

16 Actions (not covered elsewhere)

4.1 Email list for Primary Network: Janet Giddings to confirm

4.2 Crossing the Bridges representative needed

4.3 Crossing the Bridges representative: Janet Giddings available?

Alison Harris presented an update on Crossing the Bridges, an initiative to bring together places of worship and schools, facilitate communication and enhance learning.

Input was required from SACRE to update the Places of Worship Directory. Val Bolan offered to research three new places of worship to include in the Directory by the next SACRE meeting. David Taylor thanked Val for volunteering.

David Taylor commented that the Directory should include as wide a variety of faiths as possible, and not only those that are represented within West Berkshire. Members discussed the places of worship they were aware of in and out of the area.

Maria Pratico reflected on a previous school visit to St George's Church in Wash Common, Newbury which was a successful, positive experience that included candle lighting.

Alison Harris said all documents were available on the Discovery website: <https://discoveryschemeofwork.com/crossing-the-bridges/>

17 Matters arising from the Minutes (not covered elsewhere)

There were no Matters arising from the Minutes of the previous meeting.

18 Schools

6.1 Primary Network 6th February 2019 and future dates

Alison Harris advised that the recent meeting of Primary Network RE Leaders was well attended. Wokingham provide a half day introduction to RE but overall training opportunities were limited. The average time allowed for teaching RE in primary school was half an hour per week. RE is not a core subject and teaching is often led by newly qualified teachers.

The group discussed the new topic: Sikhism. There was not much local knowledge but online resources were available including a tool to hear the pronunciation of phrases.

David Taylor and Val Bolan both enjoyed the meeting and agreed it was well attended. Alison Harris said it was kind of Thatcham Baptist Church to offer the venue.

6.2 Park

House:

Year 12 Conference 27th February 2019, general situation

David Taylor met Derek Peale, Headteacher, Park House School and was advised that RE was no longer taught at GCSE or at A Level but replaced with another subject based on character and values. Keith Harvey said he was surprised as he thought RE was an achievable GCSE.

Bernard Eggleton declared an interest as a former pupil. He asked whether the Ofsted Inspectors had an opinion on this. Alison Harris advised that the Department for Education (DfE) were waiting for SACREs to notify them of non-compliance. David Taylor said Park House School had explained the decision was due to lack of funding.

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Following a group discussion it was agreed that rather than report the school to the DfE, the new Councillor appointed to SACRE may recommend a different approach.

6.3 Kennet: Faith Forum Autumn 2019

David Taylor said he had a similar conversation with Kennet School as with Park House School (above). He had visited Theale Green School and was planning to visit John O' Gaunt School.

6.4 Secondary 14th March 2019, 16:00 at St Bartholomew's School

Network

6.5 Ramadan and exam period

Bernard Eggleton said he understood children could postpone fasting until their exams were finished. Alison Harris mentioned a useful leaflet that she could distribute. Sheila Ellison said this situation was similar to the issues faced by hayfever sufferers during the exam period.

6.6 Other news

Alison Harris reminded the group there was a conference on 22nd May 2019. Keith Harvey said he had attended previously and it was very good.

- Keith Harvey left the meeting to attend his school's parents evening. David Taylor thanked him for his help and support during his time as a member of SACRE.

19 2019-20 Action Plan & Budget (April 2019 - March 2020)

7.1 Any changes needed?

David Taylor advised there were 59 primary schools in West Berkshire and 7 visits were made in the previous year. It is hoped that more visits can be made in the upcoming year.

Action Point: Janet Giddings to advise how members can claim expenses for visits.

7.2 Secondary networks: offer from David Rees to combine with Reading

Bernard Eggleton commented that many secondary schools were now academies. Sheila Ellison explained that meant they were better financed.

20 Hub

8.1 Someone needed to check directory entries for our LA area and gather new ones – Janet Giddings as above?

Val Bolan kindly offered to check the directory entries and gather new ones.

8.2 Westhill bid (see separate paper) to approve

Alison Harris said that gaps had been identified in the bid summary (school visits, transport costs). Members approved the bid as proposed by David Taylor.

8.3 Should the hub continue if the Westhill bid is not successful?

Alison Harris reminded members of the hub's benefits: good networking, produced guidance material used by primary schools.

8.4 Do we want an Autumn conference?

Members agreed an Autumn conference would be beneficial but dependent on cost.

8.5 W Berks SACRE newsletter: would need someone to produce it

It was agreed that this item would be discussed at the next meeting.

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21 Update from Commission on RE

David Taylor said SACRE should carry on as usual and advised there would be no immediate changes.

22 Any Other Business

Alison Harris referred members to a document she had published on the Discovery website.

23 Date of Next Meeting

The next meeting will be held on 11th June 2019 at 4.15pm, venue to be advised.